

## **Band Curriculum Considerations and Resources for Addressing the Contributions of MN American Indian Tribes and Communities**

(Anchor Standard 10 of the 2018 MN Arts Standards)

The information below is largely based on a presentation by Kevin Huseh at the February 2023 Minnesota Music Educators Association Midwinter Convention. Teaching in Cloquet, MN, a school where approximately 20% of students identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Kevin began exploring this topic in order to better understand many of the students in his classroom. Kevin's work is based on diligent exploration of research and thoughtful reflection on his teaching experiences.

### **About Kevin**

Kevin serves as the High School Band director for Cloquet, MN schools. Prior positions include teaching band and general music in Southern India, Muscat, Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools and Lewiston-Altura Public Schools. He earned his bachelor's degree from St. Olaf College and a master's degree from the American Band College of Sam Houston State University. When Kevin is not teaching, you will likely find him playing his trumpet, reading, hiking, fishing, or spending time with his wife Megan.



### **American Indian Music and Concert Band**

Things that I have learned

### **A Band Directors guide to using American Indian Music in the Curriculum**

MMEA 2023 Midwinter Convention

*A not-so-exhaustive collection of thoughts*

### **My Goals**

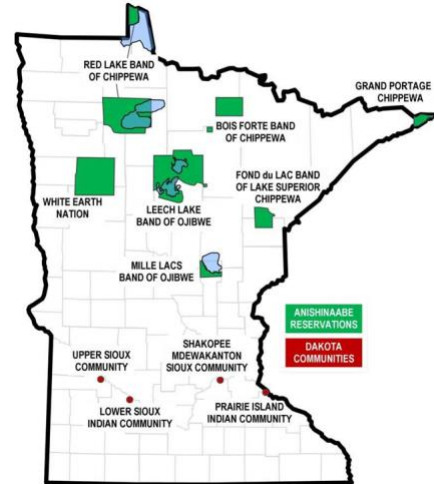
- To show my students musicians who look like, act like, sound like, or have lived like them.
- To create space for native voices in the Band Curriculum
- To challenge my students to experience band music outside of their comfort zone.

### **Disclaimers**

- I am not an expert in native culture or history
- I am absolutely not a culture bearer
- I do not teach my student how to make American Indian Music
- My experience has been almost entirely with Ojibwe people and culture.
- I have not experienced a massive breakthrough in my ability to incorporate Native topics in my curriculum

## Why is this important

- 11 federally recognized Native American communities or reservations in Minnesota -1-2% of MN population has Native ancestry (2010 census)
- 3% (27k) of Minnesota's public school students identify as American Indian/Alaska Native
- Federal reserve predicts self-identifying population will increase by 10k in 30 years.
- Teaching Native history and culture is a MN Arts standard (Anchor Standard 10)
- Public Schools have consistently failed American Indian/Alaska Native students
  - 53% are graduating high school in four years
  - 63% in 7 years



## General Things to know

- Any person identifying with a pre-colonial society:
  - American Indian- Seems preferred
  - Native or Indian- Colloquial
  - Native American- Less preferred. Old fashioned.
  - Indigenous/aboriginal- Seen as too academic or inaccurate
  - First Nations person- Specifically from Canada
  - Always ask and defer to the person's preference
- Tribal Affiliation
  - Ojibwe/Chippewa- Ojibwe preferred. Chippewa is still legally accurate.
  - Anishinaabe- Technically, refers to a broader group of linguistically and culturally related tribes and First Nations, to which Ojibwe belongs
  - Ojibwe is the safest, preferred term.
  - Dakota widely preferred (and safest)
  - S\*\*\*x is the legally correct
  - **When in doubt, defer to tribal affiliation**
- National sovereignty- When you discuss Native Americans, you are talking about a group of people who are recognized by federal treaty. To be "Indian" is to be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe (Brent Michael Davids)
  - Why is this important:
    - If our goal is to bring authentic voices into our class room, we will need to be able to determine what authentic means
  - Merriam-Webster's Definition:
    - supreme power especially over a body politic
    - freedom from external control: AUTONOMY
    - controlling influence
  - Sovereignty is central to modern American Indian identity
    - Legal sovereignty can be traced back to 1722/1778
    - Ojibwe tribal identity in North Eastern Minnesota is rooted in the 1854 treaty of LaPointe
- Diversity- Every tribe is different.
- Historic repression and cultural genocide- There is a long history of erasing Native American Culture. When that culture was allowed to stay, the authentic Native voice was often removed (American Indianist movement) or it was turned into derogatory stereotypes.

## General do's and don'ts:

### Do:

- Contact elders of the nearest/most relevant tribal community
- Read/listen/research
- Be familiar with the cultural role of music in western *and* Native traditions
  - o Western Philosophy: Music can stand on its own outside of culture or meaning. It can be perfected, reproduced and presented as a distinct entity for enjoyment. **Music is a noun.**
  - o Native Philosophy: Music is highly situational. It is an act and loses meaning when it is taken out of context. Music is generative. **Music is a verb.**
- Be familiar with the history of your local tribal community
- Ask your students

### Do Not:

- Go for it alone
- Present yourself as a culture bearer
- Predefine the outcome.

## 3 models of mutual cultural exchange

### 1). Guest presenter/performer

- Keep it local

### 2). Program an existing work

- The piece **must** have a native person or community explicitly involved in its creation. *"Based on" isn't good enough.*
- If the piece uses an existing Native American Song, it must have explicit permission from that community to perform that song. *Public domain doesn't count.*
- The piece must have extensive, and detailed, program notes and educational material.
- A guest presenter from the community that the piece represents is a VERY good idea.
- The piece does not need to "sound native." *Avoid imitation if possible.*

### 3). Commissioning new works

- All of the guidelines for existing works apply here as well
- A collaboration of some sort may be necessary
- Abandon the idea that the piece needs to "sound native"
- Think outside the box and be open to new ideas and philosophies
- Commission ideas:
  - A Native Song presented in a concert band format. Essentially a theme and variations. Must have explicit permission and detailed program notes.
  - An original work by a Native composer that explores Native culture/aesthetics.
  - An original work by a Native composer that explores or commemorates the story of a Native "hidden hero." Does not need to "Sound Native."
  - An original work of any kind by a Native composer.
  - An arrangement of Pop Music that explores an existing intersection of Native and Western Music (Jim Pepper, Halluci Nation, Keith Secola, Sheryl Cassity ,etc.)
  - Develop a new experience that focuses on the generative nature of "musicing."

## Existing pieces that fit the criteria for mutual cultural exchange

- "The Gathering of Eagles" (gr3) / "Eagle Song" (gr 1.5) by Bob Baker arr. Robert Buckley
- "Wolf Song" (Gr3) / "Spirit of the Wolf" (gr 1.5) by Bob Baker arr. Robert Buckley
- "Raven" (Gr 3) by Bob Baker arr. Robert Buckley
- "Indian Treaty Time" (gr 3.5) by Brent Michael Davids

- “Indian Story Time” (Gr 2.5) by Brent Michael Davids
- “Grandmother Song” (Gr 3) by Brent Michael Davids
- “Three Scenes from Indian Life” (Gr 4) by Louis W. Ballard (A young band version of this piece has since gone out of print.)

#### **Recommended Reading list (listed in priority order):**

- ***Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*** by Anton Treuer
- “Cultural Appropriation in Classical Music?” by Brent Michael Davids (newmusicusa.org)
- “Native American Composers” by Gail Wein (newmusicusa.org)
- ***Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1978-1934*** by John W. Troutman
- ***History of the Ojibwe People*** by William Whipple Warren
- ***Ojibwe Heritage*** by Basil Johnston
- “Native American Music and Curriculum: Controversies and Cultural Issues” by Andrea Boyea (*Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 1999)
- “Teaching Native American Music with Story for Multicultural Ends” by Andrea Boyea (*Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 2000)
- “Encountering Complexity: Native Musics in Curriculum” (*Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 1999)
- “Litaohkanao’pi—The Meeting Place Project”: An Alternative Approach to Young People’s Concerts” by Edwin B Wasiak (*International Journal of Music Education*, v23 n1)
- “Weaving First Nations Ways of Musicing into British Columbian School Music Education Curricula” by Anita Prest (*International Society of Music Education*, 2012)

#### **Recommended Watching List:**

- “Sousa on the Rez” (Desert Penguin Pictures)
- “Sousa on the Rez: Native American Brass Bands and Beyond” (Smithsonian NMAI, Youtube)
- “Remembering the History of Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S. and Continuing the Conversation: The History of Indian boarding Schools in the U.S.” (2-parts, Brenda Child, PhD and the Red Lake Nation)

#### **Other Resources:**

- Institute for Composer Diversity
- Native American Composers Alliance (branch of the American Composers Forum) - “...and we were heard”
- Composers (not an exhaustive list)
  - Brent Michael Davids (Mohican)
  - Jarod Tate (Chickasaw)
  - Bob Baker (Squamish) (with Robert Buckley)
  - Raven Chacon (Navajo)
  - Lyz Jaakola (Ojibwe)
  - Louis W. Ballard (Quapaw)
  - Dennison Wheelock (Onedia)
  - Barbara Assiginaak (Croall) (Odawa)